

<sup>11</sup> The Governor and Company of the Bank of England " was the official designation of the new bank, but it was called by its enemies the Tonnage Bank, because the bill levied certain tonnage dues as well as customs and other taxes. The necessity of money was so great that the bill passed without a division in the Commons, and in a very thin house. There was some opposition in the House of Lords, and much criticism of the action of the Commons in attaching the provisions for the bank to a tax bill. It was already May, according to the new style, when the final struggle occurred, and the debate of the last day continued from nine in the morning till six in the evening. It was proposed to strike out all the clauses relating to the bank, but its defenders suggested that this would be to invite a contest with the Commons over the old political issue, whether the Lords had the right to amend a money bill. This argument prevailed, the amendment was rejected, thirty-one votes in its favor to forty-three in the negative, and a few hours later the bill \* received the royal assent and Parliament was prorogued.

The new bank was to be organized upon the loan by the stockholders of ,£1,200,000 (\$6,000,000) \* to the government, and was authorized to issue notes, to deal in bullion and commercial bills and to make advances on merchandise. Subscriptions were opened on Thursday, June 21st, in the Mercer's Chapel, and one-quarter of the capital was subscribed the first day. Half was subscribed within three days, and by Monday noon, July 2d, the entire subscription was completed. Among the subscribers were Sir John Houblon, the first Governor, who was descended from a Flemish refugee ;

<sup>1</sup> The date was April 24, 1694, old style ; May 4, new style. The dates here given are from the contemporary records and are old style.

<sup>2</sup> The value of the English pound sterling is so generally known that I have not thought it necessary in this and the following chapter to give the equivalents in United States money for the sums named. The value of the pound sterling as reported by the Director of the Mint of the United States is 14.8665, but for the purpose of computing round figures is usually taken at \$5.00.